DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 306 998 JC 890 244

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TITLE The Integration of Learning Skills into the Curriculum.
PUB DATE Jun 88
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the National Conference of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (St. John, New Brunswick, May 30-June 1, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Affective Objectives; Community Colleges; Course Content; Course Descriptions; *Critical Thinking; *Curriculum Development; *Learning Strategies; Skill Development; *Study Skills; Two Year Colleges; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Red Deer College AB

ABSTRACT

Red Deer College's (RDC) efforts to integrate learning skills into the college curriculum are described in three papers. First, Glynis Wilson Boultbee defines learning skills (e.g., listening, viewing, reading, memorizing, asking questions, preparing for and writing exams, taking notes, researching, problem solving, and writing); attitudinal abilities (e.g., dealing with procrastination, motivation, and confidence); and metacognitive abilities (e.g., knowing one's own learning style, monitoring the effectiveness of one's study habits, and managing time). Boultbee also identifies the formats in which learning skills may be taught, including individual assistance, workshops, self-instructional materials, in-class presentations, and curricular integration; and offers a rationale for including learning skills in the curriculum. In the next paper, Robert M. Anderson and Boultbee describe RDC's 1987-88 effort to teach critical reading skills, test-taking strategies, and writing skills in addition to traditional content in a one-semester course, "Educational Foundations 201." Their discussion explains the in-class use of brainstorming, reinforcement, extension, instruction in specific learning skills, and review. In addition, Anderson and Boultbee present the results of students' evaluation of the learning skills component of the course, and offer comments on students' progress based on informal evaluations. A course description, a list of the learning skills identified by students, and a classification of study strategies are attached. Finally, Joanne Bucklee explains her role as an administrator in providing vision, solving problems, supporting the program, ensuring the provision of resources, disseminating information about the project to faculty, staff and administrators, recognizing staff involvement in the program, and providing an objective perspective. (JMC)

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THE INTEGRATION OF LEARNING SKILLS INTO THE CURRICULUM

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PRESENTED TO
THE ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
JUNE 1988

JC 890 244

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THE INTEGRATION OF LEARNING SKILLS INTO THE CURRICULUM

Introduction

This presentation on the integration of learning skills into the curriculum describes a pilot project at Red Deer College during the 1987/88 academic year. The project was a joint undertaking of the Learning Assistance Centre, part of the Division of Educational Resources and the Bachelor of Education program, one program in the Division of Arts and Education.

We will organize the session in this way: Glynis Wilson Boultbee (Learning Assistance Centre instructor) will first define learning skills and present a rationale for integration into the curriculum. Bob Anderson (Education instructor) will then describe the project that he and Glynis collaborated on during the past year. I will then describe what I did as an administrator (Dean of the Division of Educational Resources) to encourage this project.

What Are Learning Skills?

I Learning Skills - are defined here as skills which a student employs to make his or her learning more efficient and/or effective. Using these skills, the student can deal effectively with the information encountered in a program of studies. For example, a student may need to improve his or her listening skills (taking information in or input), memorizing skills (processing information), or writing skills (communicating the information out or output).

Learning skills are often improved by the development of complex strategies which may cover several skill areas. For example, SQ3R is a textbook reading strategy which incorporates several skills:

Survey - a quick preview of the chapter (input)
Question - asking questions as you preview (processing)
Read - a more thorough reading (input)
Recite - reciting aloud the material that has been read (processing and/or output)
Review - reviewing text and notes to ensure information is retained (input and/or processing)

II Attitudinal Abilities - The attitudes a student brings to learning are crucial to the successful use of learning skills. The ability to persevere in the face of frustration, the ability to motivate oneself, and other similar abilities are so important that they may in fact determine whether a student is successful. A student may, for example, be able to use the SQ3R strategy to read a textbook chapter. If, however, the material is "dry," the student may lack the motivation to work through the chapter in anything more than a cursory manner. Thus, the attitude has undercut the effective use of a strategy that the student normally uses.

III Metacognitive Abilities - When engaged in learning, successful students know what learning skills to use, know how to monitor their learning, and know that it may be necessary to adjust learning skills and strategies periodically. These elements of learning are just as important as learning skills and attitudinal abilities.

The student who is about to attack the dry textbook chapter, for example, must first know that SQ3R is a useful strategy to use when reading the textbook chapter. Then, the student must constantly monitor the effectiveness of the strategy by asking questions. ("Am I previewing the important material?"; "How quickly should I be reading?"; "What kinds of information should I recite aloud and when should I recite?"; etc.) Finally, the student must make changes if a strategy is not working. ("I don't think I'll recite at the end of each paragraph. It's too disruptive. I'll wait and summarize larger sections of the chapter aloud instead.")

LEARNING SKILLS

Input:

- Listening
- Viewing
- Reading

Processing:

- Memorizing
- Asking questions
- Preparing for and writing exams
- Notetaking from textbooks
- Notetaking from lectures
- Researching
- Using library
- Problem Solving

Output:

- Writing
- Speaking

ATTITUDINAL ABILITIES

- dealing with procrastination
- developing motivation
- developing confidence
- developing self-discipline
- concentrating

METACOGNITIVE ABILITIES

- knowing own learning style
- monitoring effectiveness of study habits
- managing time
- setting goals
- setting priorities

Learning Skills and Important Attitudinal & Metacognitive Abilities

Why Teach Learning Skills in the Curriculum?

Learning skills may be taught using a number of formats, including the following:

1. Individual assistance - is offered through the Learning Assistance Centre. The student who needs personal and perhaps long term instruction may benefit from the attention and support of an LAC instructor. A student may also receive individual assistance from his or her content instructor - if the instructor has time. This method of instruction is very time intensive, but crucial for some students.

2. Workshops - (for the student body or a particular program) provide students with an overview of particular learning skills. Less personal than the individual assistance, these workshops can nonetheless be very valuable - particularly for those students who only need an overview to learn or remember strategies that they can put to good use.

3. Self-Instructional Materials - are available through the Learning Assistance Centre. Students can use self-paced print materials, audio tapes, or computer software to build their learning skills. Usually the students discuss their needs with an LAC instructor who then suggests which resources would be helpful. Self-instructional materials are beneficial for students who want flexibility and independence when dealing with their learning skills needs. When designing a self-instructional program, the instructor can also take into account learning preferences. (For example: Auditory learners can be given taped programs.) Students working on their own (or with minimal supervision) do need to make a firm commitment and manage their time effectively. If they don't, they may not complete the program.

4. In-Class Presentations - (by a Learning Assistance Centre instructor or other learning skills expert) provide students in a particular class with information about (and some practice with) learning skills. The content instructor identifies what the students need in order to become more effective learners. The specialist then designs a class or classes to suit both the students' needs and the content of the course. This format ensures that all students in the class receive the instruction. Students may also be more likely to appreciate the importance and relevance of learning skills if the content instructor: 1. gives up regular class time; and 2. reflects back on the lesson(s) frequently later in the term.

5. Integration into the Curriculum - involves offering learning skills instruction as part of the curriculum. The instructor (or program) decides which learning skills should be taught. Learning objectives are set and learning activities designed. The learning skills are therefore perceived as being an integral part of the course or program. The instructor becomes a learning skills expert who can address the students' needs in a flexible, ongoing manner.

We believe that ideally learning skills should be a part of the curriculum for the following reasons:

a. All students receive learning skills instruction: With workshops or voluntary individual tutoring, some of the students who need learning skills the most may not attend. Preaching to the converted is gratifying, but has no effect on a large segment of the population. Integration forces all students to become involved in learning skills and therefore the rate of conversion will probably be higher. As a result, more students will be successful learners and the retention rate may very well improve.

b. Students can see the relevance of learning skills to their program and courses: An instructor who has designed effective activities which integrate content and learning skills is in an excellent position to ensure that students understand why those skills are important to the discipline. Furthermore, the course instructor will, in some cases, enjoy more credibility than a stranger who teaches one or two classes - never to be seen again. Thus, the students may be more likely to accept the course instructor's explanation of the applicability of learning skills to the college experience.

c. Repetition results in the development of habits: A course instructor can ensure that important learning skills are highlighted throughout the term. One or two exposures to learning skills may only raise the students' awareness. Constant exposure (and regular practice), on the other hand, allow the students to develop good habits which they will be able to use in present and future learning situations.

d. Integration is an exciting challenge to the course instructor: Designing an activity which integrates content and learning skills can be time consuming, but is also very rewarding. Many instructors thoroughly enjoy learning about and integrating learning skills. Some of the most excited are those who have been teaching for years and who are looking for a way of making their experience in the classroom fresh.

A Case Study of the Integration of Learning Skills Into A College Course

Robert M. Anderson
Red Deer College

Glynis Wilson Boultbee
Red Deer College

The Course

The one-semester course was a Red Deer College University Transfer course: Educational Foundations 201. There were 30 students enrolled. Students are encouraged to take the course during the first year of their program.

This course has been designed to impart an understanding of the nature of Canadian education as it has developed over the past 200 years. In addition, students are given the opportunity of building on and employing this understanding in analyzing the role of schooling in contemporary society. A brief description of the course and its general objectives can be found in Appendix A.

The Learning Skills Objectives

The following objectives were decided upon in consultation with the Department Head of the Red Deer College Learning Assistance Centre.

Upon completion of the course, students are to have learned three broad skills. They are listed below.

1. Employ appropriate learning strategies to read critically.

   Strategies included are the:

   a) employment of the SQ3R;
   b) identification of the main ideas and details;
   c) drawing of reasonable inferences (including interpretations, predictions and conclusions);
   d) identification of techniques used to present information;
   e) relation of information presented to previous knowledge;
   f) analysis of information presented in the course to determine its relative importance and its relationship to other course information;
   g) monitoring of the effectiveness of strategies being used to ensure comprehension and analysis are occurring

2. Employ appropriate learning strategies when preparing for and taking exams.

   Strategies included are the:

   a) identification of material that exams will encompass;
   b) identification of themes and patterns in course material;
   c) employment of active learning strategies when studying and memorizing;
   d) reading of tests critically and carefully to determine the task that must be accomplished;
   e) monitoring of the effectiveness of test preparation and test-taking strategies

3. Communicate ideas effectively when writing.

   Tasks included are the:

   a) determination of the purpose for writing;
   b) analysis of the writing task to determine its relationships to the entire course
   c) development of a plan for developing ideas;
   d) monitoring of the effectiveness of writing.

The Process

A Brainstorming Session

Through a series of brainstorming exercises (individual, small-group, pairs, large-group) during the second and third days of the course, the students identified the learning skills that they believed most important. As little guidance as possible was provided so that the students would realize that they, not the instructor, considered these skills important. However, the rationale for teaching learning skills throughout the course was explained; as was the concept of metacomprehension. The students were encouraged to make notes on flip-chart pages in any manner they desired. The learning skills emerged clustered in three categories -- thinking, studying and attitudinal. Three lists done by pairs of students are contained in Appendix B. These lists illustrate the types of learning skills that the class believed to be important. As well, the lists demonstrate some interesting thinking process used while note taking. The lists demonstrate that individual students are quite comfortable note taking in remarkably diverse ways if given the opportunity. Although cued by the Learning Assistance Centre Department Head the diversity was still a revelation for the instructor. Individuals obviously learn differently and there is no correct method of studying. The entire session was considered a positive learning experience by the class. Therefore this exercise would be conducted again by the instructor and different styles of note taking such as mapping and the split-page method would be encouraged.

Reinforcement and Extension

Prior to the writing of the mid-term examination, the lists of important learning skills developed by the students, in pairs, were distributed to all class members. A discussion was then led by the instructor. Commonalities between lists were identified as were skills that were missing. It was agreed that the students' lists were primarily "wish lists", that is 'what ought to be' not 'what is'. The lists contained skills that for the most part were within the affective domain, not the cognitive domain. As well most of the identified skills were considered passive not active. In order to illustrate the skills not identified, metacomprehension work by Long (1985) was utilized. Her categories for classifying studying strategies (These categories are

contained in Appendix C) were presented. The importance of such study strategies as paraphrasing, relating to personal experience and summarizing was stressed. As well, the importance of interactive strategies as well as passive strategies was stressed.

The Introduction of Specific Learning Skills

During the second week an entire class was devoted to the teaching of certain learning strategies. These strategies were related to the first major reading assignment of the course -- an article by Harris (1981). The SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review) method was presented. The concept of levels of reading (main ideas, detail, inference, evaluation and application) was taught. Finally, note taking techniques, such as highlighting, making marginal notes, mapping, the split-page approach and flash cards were introduced. As an assignment, the class was asked to utilize these note taking procedures while studying Harris's article. They were also instructed to identify his main idea and his supporting ideas, look for inferences and to evaluate the article. Several handouts from the Learning Assistance Center related to studying were also distributed and discussed.

The following class was devoted to the substance of Harris's article "The emotional structure of Canadian regionalism". Of equal importance, it was possible to reinforce the learning strategies and to review them.

Further Learning Skills

During the fourth week of the course, class time was devoted to the discussion of strategies helpful in preparing for and writing the first of two assigned papers. At this time, the class was taught to identify content and direction statements that are found, not only in the assigned question for the paper, but in examination questions. As well, a list of "key words in essay questions" was distributed and discussed. Two weeks later these and other previously discussed strategies were reviewed when the graded papers were returned and discussed. An entire class was devoted to a discussion of the substance of the paper.

Learning Skills Reviewed

At the end of the seventh week of the course the mid-term examination was returned. This provided an excellent opportunity to relate the process approach of the course learning skills component to the substantive course content. Therefore a full class was scheduled to discuss the results of the essay examination. The examination had been written only two days previously, so the content and study strategies utilized were still fresh in the students' minds.

Again the identification of content and direction statements was stressed -- as was the use of interactive versus passive study strategies. The instructor pointed out that regardless of each individual's grade, there could have been an improvement if more strategies had been utilized and if the key statements

in the questions had been better identified. The relating of diverse activities, tasks, and concepts was stressed. The students were told to prepare for the examination by asking themselves "Why"? (For example, "Why am I asked to read this particular article?") Furthermore the instructor suggested that links should be identified. For example, they were asked to identify connections between class lectures, assigned readings, personal experience and the task (in this case an essay examination). This approach is illustrated in Figure 1.

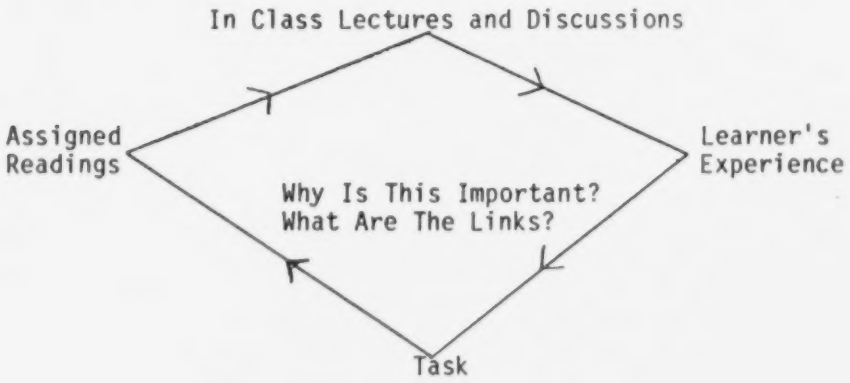


Figure 1

An Approach to Learning

The Reinforcement of Learning Skills

The mid-term examination was the last time that a significant amount of class time was necessary to devote to learning skills. During the final six weeks students were reminded of the various learning techniques at appropriate moments, such as at the beginning of a unit or prior to any assignments, but nothing new was introduced.

When the second position paper was graded and returned the class, grade point average was two points (a nine point scale is used at Red Deer College) higher than on the first position paper. This grade increase, coupled with student feedback, provided evidence that the students were becoming more comfortable utilizing the learning skills that they had been taught. The class had been alerted at the outset of the course to the fact that they would find these strategies time consuming at first, but with time, if they continued to practice the suggested strategies, the time commitment would decrease and their studying would result in greater learning. This appeared to happen. A 1.5 increase in the class grade point average from the mid-term to the final examination is another possible indication that the teaching of and subsequent utilization of systematic learning skills resulted in increased learning of the substantive content of Educational Foundations 201.

No student's grades dropped during the fourteen weeks of the course. This seemed to provide the necessary reinforcement for the students to utilize the study skills that they were introduced to during the early segments of the course.

Further evidence that the integration of learning skills within the normal content of a course is a worthwhile endeavour was provided on the second last day of the course. On that day, the class was debriefed. The reasons for an integrated learning approach were expanded and clarified in depth. The learning skills were reviewed. The entire approach was discussed. Finally, students filled out an evaluation of the Learning Skills component. Twenty-three students responded.

Evaluation

The detailed objectives of the learning skills approach were stated at the outset of this paper. This detail was never presented to the students. Based on an observed improvement in student writing and communication skills and on informal feed-back, the instructor believes that the students learned more than they would have if learning skills had not been formally presented. The learning skills objectives were achieved.

Based on analysis of the responses to the questionnaire written by the students it would appear that the students also believe that the approach was worthwhile and should be continued. Their responses also indicate that the objectives were met. Table I contains the six questions asked and a summary of the responses. Most questions asked for examples or further comments. To the question "Are you reading and taking notes differently?" 82.6% responded in the affirmative. Sample comments were: "Reading with and for more understanding, highlighting less, marginal notes." "Yes, when reading I use marginal notes." "Yes, looking for details, highlighting, questioning myself."

To the question "Are you preparing for and/or writing exams differently?" 60.9% said yes. Sample positive comments include: "Hope so but sometimes I wonder. I'm trying to anticipate questions and link things together which are important." "Yes, i.e. - active studying - don't just re-read, I write down things and recite to myself." "On some subjects, yes. I'm spending more time rehearsing the steps I'll likely take in completing the exam."

To the question "Are you able to better communicate your ideas when writing?" 81.8% responded positively. Representative examples were: "Yes. I've learned to get right to the point of things and have solid support for it." "Yes, more important facts from the reading are put into the essay." "Yes, better able to organize my thoughts due to better notetaking and preparation."

To the final question "Should an emphasis on learning Skills be included in this course again?" 87% said yes. One response serves as an excellent summary of the entire process and suggests that the approach should be utilized in further courses. The response was as follows: "I think it does have a use. At first I thought it was a waste of time, but now I find that various learning skills come into my head while actually doing a paper or exam and they sometimes help."

TABLE I

STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF EDUCATION FOUNDATION 201 INNOVATIVE PROJECT, WINTER, 1988

As a result of the emphasis on Learning Skills:

1. Are you reading and taking notes differently?

Yes - 19	No - 4
82.6%	17.4%

2. Are you preparing for and/or writing exams differently?

Yes - 14	No - 9
60.9%	39.1%

3. Are you able to better communicate your ideas when writing?

Yes - 18	Maybe - 1	No - 3
81.8%	4.5%	13.6%

Students perceive changes in	no area	0	0%
	1 area	4	17.4%
	2 areas	11	47.8%
	all 3 areas	8	34.8%

4. What did you like best about this approach?

gradual introduction of skills over time	7	31.8%
perceived improvement in learning/studying	6	27.3%
helped with content and tasks of course	6	27.3%
group work	2	9.1%
organization and structure	1	4.5%

5. What did you like least about this approach?

amount of information/hard to put into practice	4	26.7%
too spread out	3	20 %
inappropriate to level/didn't use much	3	20 %
the lecture on learning skills	2	13.3%
unsure	2	13.3%
repetetive/boring	1	6.7%

6. Should an emphasis on Learning Skills be included in this course again?

Yes - 20	Yes & No - 1	No - 2
87%	4.3%	8.7%

Sample Comments for question six:

"Yes, because it can apply both to Ed. Fdn. and all of your other courses."
"Definitely - the course is logically suited to handle this type of double curriculum ..."
"Yes. It helped me. It taught me how to read. Before it would take me hours to read a chapter because I was scared of missing information."
"No ... I don't feel it is appropriate to teach this at a college level. Most students have a system in place by now."
"Yes, there are a lot of people that have poor learning skills and [this] thing could really help them to improve."
"I think it does have a use. At first I thought it was a waste of time, but I now find that various learning skills come into my head while actually doing a paper or exam and they sometimes help."

A Monitoring Process

Canadian studies is a major component of one of the six basic units of Educational Foundations 201. Three articles derived from a research project that the instructor had been involved in were therefore utilized as instrumental content for the topic and as a vehicle to (in a general way) monitor the students' development of learning skills.

One article was distributed during the first week; one was distributed after eight weeks and one was distributed after thirteen weeks. Each article increased in length and complexity. After the third article was studied the topic was discussed in class.

As each article was read the students were requested to answer three questions in writing and return them. The questions accompanying the first article were as follows:

1. After you have read the Introduction, stop reading and answer the following question: How are you reading and preparing for an examination question or for a class discussion?

2. After you have read the Complete Article again, answer the question: How have you read and prepared for an examination question or for a class discussion?

3. Concluding Exercise: Write one question you think suitable for a class discussion or for an essay examination. The question should require critical thinking.

The questions accompanying the remaining articles were almost identical to the first set of questions.

The responses to these questions articles proved impossible to analyze objectively. However, students provided more detailed responses to the questions as they progressed from article to article. They also seemed to indicate that more interactive strategies were being utilized by the time the third article was read. Of great importance was the fact that the students understood the topic well when it was finally discussed during two classes at the conclusion of the term. Although no adequate analysis proved possible the instructor would present the same questions another time when the articles are studied. The questions did enable the monitoring of the development of reading comprehension strategies.

A Final Point

In conclusion one final point should be stressed. The integration of learning skills into Educational Foundations 201 necessitated detailed planning prior to the teaching of the course. The planning was worthwhile. Because of this planning, none of the traditional content of the course had to be deleted. The presentations were clarified and modified which likely improved the entire course. The students received all of the traditional content of a university transfer course as well as learning study skills which improved their performance in Educational Foundations 201 and quite probably in their entire program.

References

Harris, C. The emotional structure of Canadian regionalism. In the Walter L. Gordon Lecture Series, Vol. 5, The challenges of Canada's regional diversity. Toronto: Omnigraphics Inc., 1981.

Long, E.W. The effects of metacomprehension cuing on college student achievement. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1985.

APPENDIX A

Educational Foundations 201
Course Description

Educational Foundation 201

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Canadian educational arrangements are characterized by complexity and diversity. This suggests that they have evolved as a consequence of the interaction of a variety of historical forces. Nonetheless, they appear to be eminently suited to the social, political and cultural milieu of Canada.

This course is designed to impart an understanding of the nature of Canadian educaTIon as it has developed over the past 200 years. In addition, students shall have the opportunity of building on and employing this understanding in analyzing the role of schooling in contemporary society.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of the course are:

1. to introduce students to a systematic process of analyzing the relationship between education, schooling, society and geography;

2. to acquaint students with the historical and geographical diversity of Canadian education by applying this method of analysis to three regions of the country at various stages of their development;

3. to apply knowledge and understanding gained from these analyses to a consideration of the character and contemporary Canadian society and the role of education within it; and

4. to provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate competence and facility in both written and oral form in analyzing and presenting in a disciplined and objective manner ideas and arguments concerning educational issues and problems.

In the opinion of the instructor the ability to practice critical analysis is an intended learning outcome of equal importance to the conceptualization of substantive content. Class discussion, class assignment, assigned papers and examinations will reflect this opinion.

APPENDIX B

Sample Learning Skills Identified By Students

SHEET #3

ATTITUDE

1. motivation
2. interest
3. discipline
4. goal setting
5. confidence
6. open-mindedness
7. positive attitude

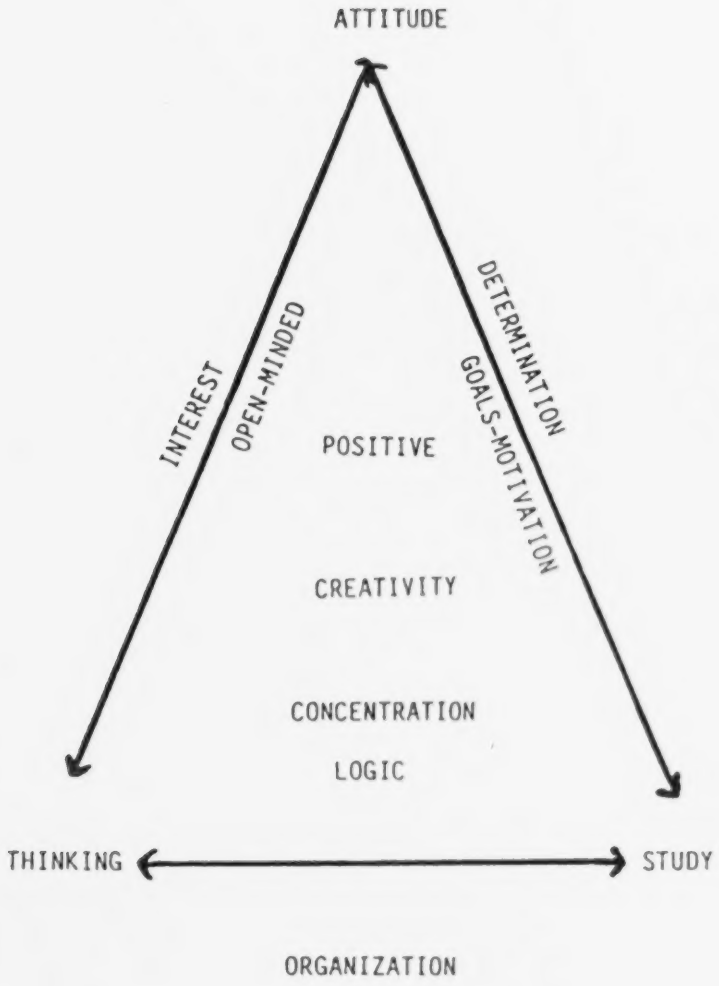
STUDYING

1. proper environment
2. time management
3. organization
4. appropriate study method (ie: SQ3R)
5. keeping up on work
6. concentration
7. reading for content

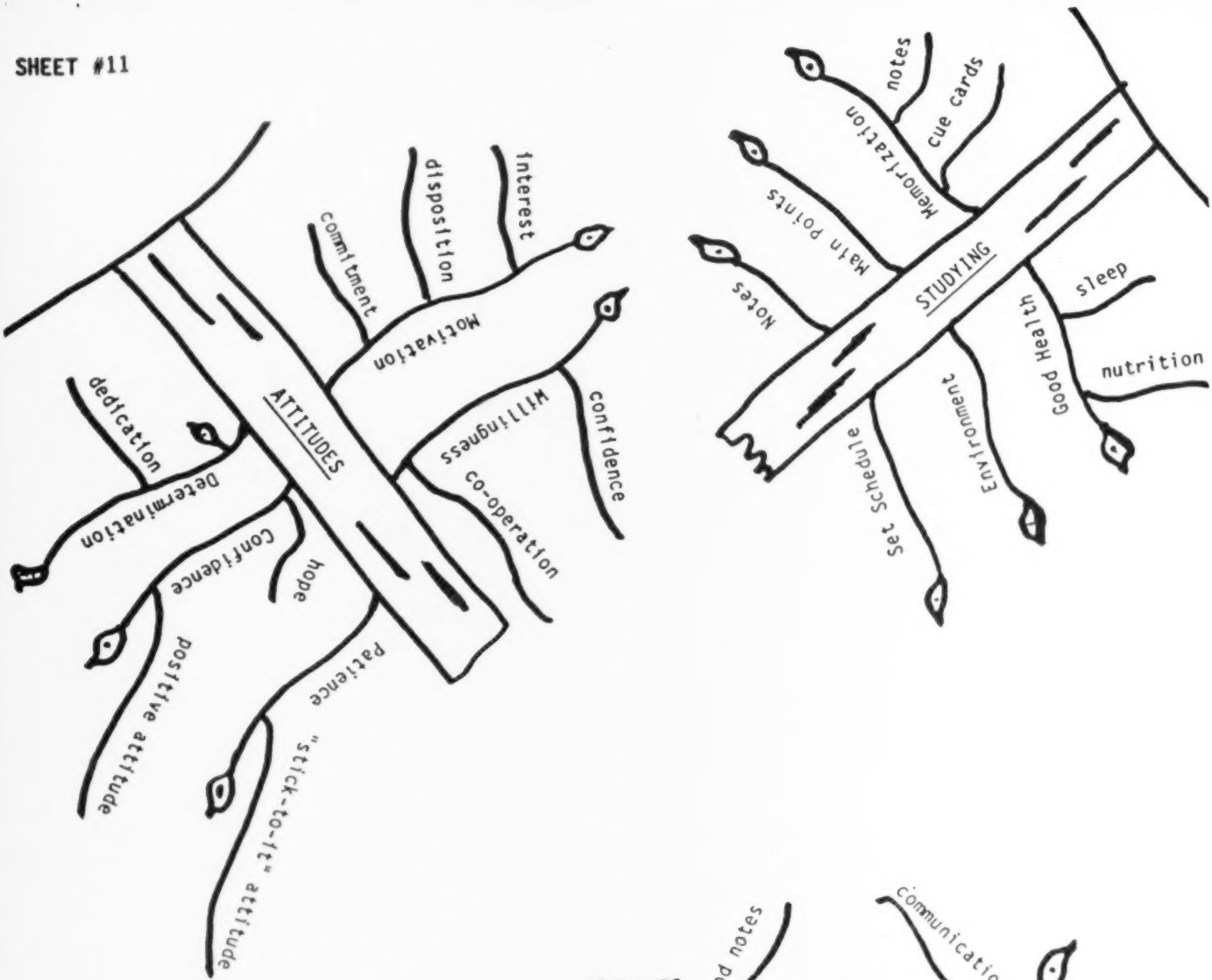
THINKING

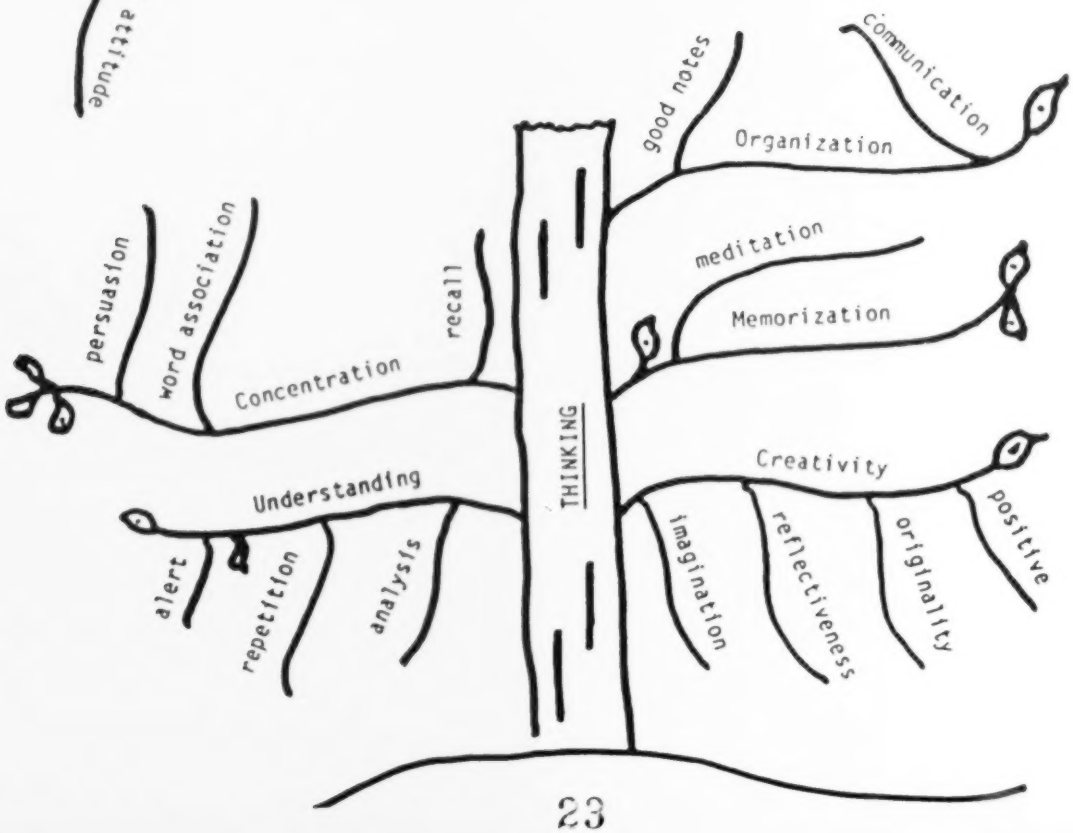
1. organization of thoughts
2. being able to think abstractly
3. analysis or synthesis
4. mnemonics
5. concentration
6. clarity of thoughts
7. recall

SHEET #10


ATTITUDE
INTEREST
OPEN-MINDED
DETERMINATION
GOALS-MOTIVATION
POSITIVE
CREATIVITY
CONCENTRATION
LOGIC
THINKING
STUDY
ORGANIZATION

SHEET #11


ATTITUDES
dedication
Determination
Confidence
hope
positive attitude
patience
"stick-to-it" attitude
co-operation
Willingness
confidence
Motivation
commitment
disposition
interest
STUDYING
notes
cue cards
Memorization
Main points
Notes
sleep
Good Health
nutrition
Environment
Set Schedule


THINKING
good notes
Organization
Communication
meditation
Memorization
Creativity
positive
originality
reflectiveness
imagination
recall
Concentration
persuasion
word association
Understanding
alert
repetition
analysis

APPENDIX C

Categories For Classifying Study Strategies'

'As conceptualized by E.W. Long in The effects of metacomprehension using on college student achievement. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1985.'

CATEGORIES FOR CLASSIFYING STUDY STRATEGIES

INTERACTIVE STRATEGIES

Anticipating the Test

Strategies to be included in this category are those that suggest the student is trying to anticipate what might be on the exam. Examples would be comments such as "I pose questions for myself about the material," and "I try to guess what might be on the exam."

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing involves efforts to derive an understanding of material in one's own words rather than in the words of the author. "I made certain I could restate definitions in my own words," and "I tried to put information in my own words." NOTE: Any reference to writing out ideas in own words should be classified as notetaking.

Relating to Personal Experience

Included in this category are those strategies that indicate efforts to be personally involved with the material. Examples would be: comparing what is written to personal experiences; putting one-self into the examples; relating information to one's childhood, adulthood.

Integrating/Grouping

Integrating or grouping involves the uniting of ideas into a whole or in some way trying to link ideas together in order to achieve better understanding. Examples would be statements that refer to fitting ideas together, comparing different sections with one another, and seeing how ideas are logically related.

Summarizing

Summarizing involves student efforts to reduce ideas in a given section (e.g. under a single heading) or sections into a more concise statement. References to making a summary of ideas in a passage or putting ideas in more concise form would be examples. NOTE: Saying that ideas are put in one's own words would be classified as paraphrasing, whereas indicating that sections were rephrased or shortened would be summarizing.

Taking Notes

Any reference to writing out ideas would be included in notetaking. Jotting down, listing, outlining, and writing would be examples.

Visualizing

Any statements regarding the use of visual images are a part of this category. An example would be trying to form mental images from examples in the handout.

PASSIVE STRATEGIES

Skimming

Skimming involves quickly previewing material before reading it in more detail. Comments about examining headings, topic sentences, length of the assigned reading, summaries, looking for the gist of the material, attending to italicized words and the like before reading would be examples.

Adjusting Speed

Adjusting speed has reference to changing reading speeds in accordance with the difficult or ease of the material. Statements about reading carefully, slowing down to understand, trying to comprehend by careful reading and similar statements are part of the adjusting speed category.

Rereading

Rereading includes any selective rereading of material. Examples are rereading main ideas, underlined or highlighted material, notes, and the like.

Underlining

Highlighting important points, placing stars or asterisks by important ideas, underlining of words are included in the underlining category.

Memorizing

Any reported effort to commit material to memory are part of this category. Examples are the use of neumonics, mentally repeating ideas, and going "over and over" the material.

Questionable

Any comment that cannot be understood because it is illegible or unclearly stated is to be placed in this category.

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The Administrator's Role

The role of the administrator is clearly illustrated in this presentation. You get things started; you provide support along the way; you check in the middle to make sure things are going along as expected; and at the end you make sure that the instructors and staff get the recognition they deserve for a job well done.

Administrative roles vary depending on the people and the project. My role in this project can be described under six headings: i) vision; ii) support and problem solving; iii) resources; iv) communication; v) recognition; and vi) perspective.

Vision (Yours and Others)

The administrator must have a vision which is communicated to his or her staff. The administrator must also be prepared to listen to the visions of staff members so that together the whole group develops a shared direction. I have found one way to achieve this is to take the staff jogging. When they are in a weakened condition, you can convince them of almost anything!

This project began several years ago when Glynis and I talked (while jogging) about "resource based learning," use of audiovisual materials, and "tools for learning." My role at that time was a proactive one: providing information, persuading, sharing experiences, and educating. Over time, Glynis became convinced of the value of some of my ideas. She took the ideas and developed several strategies for implementation. My role has since changed. It is now one of reacting and learning from someone else's vision. "Metacognition", for example, was never part of my original Tools for Learning kit. The most exciting part of this exercise for me as an administrator is seeing staff grow and watching a vision I had develop.

Support and Problem Solving

Support has a number of dimensions, from listening to cheerleading and problem solving, to positive thinking. What is needed varies from person to person and project to project. Several years ago I was told, "As an administrator, you do not have the right to have a bad day." (Not one of my strengths, but unfortunately very true.) My mood and my behaviour affect a lot of people in our organization. I must care, I must be interested in what people are doing and how they are feeling -- everyday, all day.

Support must be there to encourage risktaking and innovation without fear of sanction if an idea does not work. Consistent behaviour, with actions congruent with words, is another way of being supportive.

One serendipitous happening several years ago has been beneficial to my work with this project, among others. Glynis and I together learned a problem solving model - which gives us a process for solving technical problems or conflict. Having an agreed upon process in place, which both individuals or groups are comfortable with, helps considerably when difficulties do arise. The development or use of a common approach to problem solving is something that I would strongly advise administrators to undertake with their staff. To

be implemented successfully it is necessary that staff understand why a common approach is desirable, have a role in selecting the model used, and undertake with the administrator joint training and practice prior to use in real situations.

Resources

An administrator has access to and, in some instances, control over resources to make projects easier or possible. Resources include time, dollars, people, information, and access to expertise.

It is important to provide financial resources so that faculty can try new things, without undue hardship because of an unreasonable workload. There should be clear guidelines about how money can be accessed and emphasis on solid design of projects to ensure accountability and validity. But the red tape should be kept to a minimum -- the idea is to promote, not inhibit through administrivia, innovations and new directions.

At Red Deer College, we have two sources of dollars to support educational innovations: an innovative instruction budget dispersed by the College-Wide Professional Development Committee, a joint committee of faculty and administration; and an instructional design budget, allocated by the Deans and the Vice President Academic. The "Integration of Learning Skills Project" was funded from the Innovative Project fund. One of the project's outcomes, linked back to professional development, is a handbook to train faculty to integrate learning skills into the curriculum. $3500.00 was provided to fund release time, secretarial support, duplicating, and travel to do research.

At Red Deer College, we also have professional development funds available for faculty use for research, conferences, workshops, travel to other institutions, reading materials, etc. Prior to accessing PD funding (approximately $650.00 per year per person), faculty must have on file a professional development profile which links their individual goals to their department and college goals. As Dean, I grant time for professional development and sit on the divisional committee which approves the dollars.

Communication

There is a link between support and communication and between communication and recognition. The shared vision must be communicated. In this instance, our division has a strategic plan which makes statements like "Learning how to learn is more important that what is learned." Not everyone may agree with us, but the plan has been circulated to the other Deans, the President, etc. It also outlines the areas that we will concentrate on over the next five years -- one being the integration of learning skills. Thus, this project could initially be judged within the context of the goals for our division and should have been no surprise to anyone in the institution.

As an administrator, I must take all opportunities (in meetings and through formal and informal discussions with faculty and staff, administration and Board) to disseminate information about this project and its benefits to the institution. Internal and external publications provide opportunities for highlighting activities.

As Dean, I can also suggest to people that they make presentations at conferences like ACCC, seminars, etc. This serves as a communications device to the outside world, but also lets the institution know that it's important to let others know the results of this project.

One way to enhance communication is to share learning experiences. Attending PD sessions and workshops with faculty helps. Informal contact (e.g. over coffee with faculty and staff to discuss ideas or problems) may result in all kinds of ideas and sharing of views.

Recognition

The form of recognition depends on the personnel involved, both the administrator and the staff. It should be individualized -- and not routine. It can be as simple as a verbal thank you or a written informal acknowledgement, or it can be more formalized like a formal memo with copies to the President or, if appropriate and possible, a monetary reward.

At Red Deer College, we can give double increments. We also have a program called KITE (Keeping In Touch Effectively) which provides a number of options for personal and program recognition at the individual, divisional and college levels. This year, the Learning Assistance Centre won the Vice President's Program Award of Excellence.

Supporting opportunities to publish and granting time for workload release are types of recognition within an administrator's control. Hugs are also good for support, communication, and recognition.

Perspective

This section should be called "There is nothing that cannot be improved or changed." Any project must be kept within the context of the everchanging vision of the department, college, and the community. Questions like "What's next? What are you going to do differently next time?" asked at the right time can move everything forward. This is the principle of creating change and managing excellence.

With respect to this project, I might ask, "Is this a model that can be used to integrate learning skills into other courses?" or "Can more learning skills, e.g. library skills, be incorporated next time?"

As educators today, we have no idea what skills, information, or knowledge will be expected of our students tomorrow. If we are to be successful, we must provide a solid foundation of learning and living skills.

There is nothing about the administrator's role expressed above which is new or revolutionary. Developing and sharing a mission, providing support, participating in problem solving, being a resource, communicating, recognizing and celebrating successes, not imposing sanctions for failures, and creating change sounds a little like a summary of managing by best sellers. But the sharing of information is what best sellers do and what I have tried to do today in describing some techniques which I feel contributed to the success of this project.

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